



## Facing the Reasonable Questions of a Skeptical Culture

### GOD VS. SCIENCE

It seems that in recent years a turf war between God and science has ignited. Numerous discussions and debates have occurred, dedicated to answering the question, "Can you be a faithful Christian and a faithful scientist at the same time?" Finding a reasonable answer is unfortunately rare. Most debaters are more concerned with putting distance between the two than engaging in reasonable communication about these important issues. For them, the battle lines between the Bible and secular thought have been firmly drawn. Bill Nye and Ken Ham have faced off. And the rest of us try to stay out of the way and watch as the battle unfolds.

The effects of these "discussions" are most clearly seen in our college students. So many Bible-believing high school graduates head off to college only to return in four short years rejecting the existence of God and authority of Scripture entirely. After sitting under the direction of their well-educated professors, they come to reject any and all ideas of a sovereign creator. Their "faith in God" has been replaced by "faith in scientific facts." They were offered only two options: believe in God or believe in Science. These students then return to their parents' homes and proudly announce they have been enlightened and that there is no God! As if God and Science are incompatible. Is this true? Is there a categorical division between God and Science? Can you believe in both, and if so, where is the reasonable

distinction?

Even though there are some who don't want to admit it, being a Christian and being a scientist is not a contradiction in terms. Many scientists are religious, and many religious leaders are scientists. In fact, one science teacher, Terry Niblett, wisely writes that without religion you can't accurately pursue science.

*"Science, it seems, is merely the tool that can explain not only that God did it all, but HOW he did it! Get it ... God invented science! He invented every law of nature that determines how everything that exists must obey! From magnetism, gravity, atomic power, sub-atomic forces, chemical interactions between atoms and molecules, to forces we haven't discovered yet. And you know the more we dig, study, do research, and eventually discover, the more miraculous God's universe becomes, not less!"*

Unfortunately, this approach is not as common. Instead, we are led to believe that if we accept the existence of God, the authority of Scripture, and God's creation of the world "Ex Nihilo" (out of nothing), we automatically are at odds with science and all scientific thought. This distinction is commonplace today. But historically, this division was never present. Secular philosophers like Plato and Aristotle were among the first to look at religion and science together and they saw no distinction between the

two. They understood that science was the process of trying to understand the natural laws behind creation. Science wasn't trying to disprove the existence of God; rather, it was observing and developing reasonable hypotheses for what we see in the world around us.

A good question for believers to consider is what the Bible says about science. While the Bible doesn't ever use the term "science" (like it never says "trinity"), that doesn't mean it's silent on the subject. The wonder and depth of our natural world is written about throughout Scripture and continually captured the minds of its human authors. God designed the physical world to promote His glory. Scripture is flush with knowledge and wisdom of the physical world and commends its study. Consider the following verses: Psalms 19:1-5, 33:6-15, and 111; Colossians 1:15-17 and 2:3; Proverbs 25:2 and 6:6; Job 38:4-30, Ecclesiastes 1:13-17, and Isaiah 40:21-23.

Worshippers are the best scientists because they come at it with wonder. The Bible encourages us to study and learn from our natural world. God intended this earth to declare His glory (Romans 1), but many use their observations of the earth to deny God. It's at this moment that the separation begins. What should happen when God and science seem to disagree? Is it an all or nothing reality?

We must keep in mind several facts during this discussion. First, although Scripture contains scientific facts, it is not designed as a scientific book. The purpose of the Bible is to explain redemption, not to explain scientific realities. While no scientific discovery will threaten or destroy our faith, that does not mean Scripture will offer the most in-depth look at every area of our world. We often try to make Scripture say more about science than it does.

Second, we can't forget a central tenet of Reformed faith – *Sola Scriptura*. In the moments when there is real disagreement between the two parties, *Sola Scriptura* helps us weave through the hard conversations. *Sola Scriptura* is the understanding that Scripture is the final authority. It is the ultimate "trump card." If the Bible and Science clearly contradict each other, the Bible wins – every

time. There is no other form of truth higher than God's word. With that being said, can and should we learn from science and scientific discoveries – of course! There is not necessarily an automatic contradiction between the two. But God's word, in those moments of contradiction, always receives the final say. God has allowed us to observe and learn from His creation. Science, in its purest form, has a way of glorifying God, not denying Him.

### Discussion Questions

God intended this earth to declare His glory (Romans 1). However, many use their observations of earth to deny God. How can we reconstruct the conversation to point to God's original intention?

Evolution vs. intelligent design seems to be the clearest division within this discussion. Outside of the education system, how does this discussion impact your world? How does this discussion impact the Gospel?

"The heavens declare the glory of the Lord." Share with the group wonders from nature that inspire you to better worship.